

This Week in Congress

July 26, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." This week's headlines are:

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Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke Warns Economic Outlook is Uncertain

On Wednesday, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke provided an update on our nation's economy, and warned that "the economic outlook remains unusually uncertain." He went on to say that unemployment is expected to remain well above 7 percent through the end of 2012 and that it will take "a significant amount of time" to restore the 8.5 million jobs lost during the current recession. This troubling report came just hours after President Obama signed into law the most sweeping financial regulatory reform legislation since the Great Depression, instituting stricter regulations on community banks and causing even greater uncertainty for banks in Kansas and across the country.

This Administration and Congress and have contributed to this high level of uncertainty in our economy by passing legislation such as cap and trade, health care reform and financial regulation reform. When businesses are faced with higher taxes, increased energy bills, additional government regulations and fewer opportunities to borrow money, it is no wonder they are reluctant to hire workers and invest in future projects.

To help boost our economy, I have introduced the Small Business Jobs and Tax Relief Act, HR 4779, which will help small businesses create jobs and invest in the future. Ninety-seven percent of all businesses in America are small businesses, and this legislation will help those businesses grow, create new jobs and invest in our economy. [Click here](#) to read more about this legislation.

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USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up Will Begin August 2nd

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack, announced that a general sign-up period will be held for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) from August 2, 2010 through August 27, 2010. During House Agriculture Committee hearings over the past few months, I have raised concerns with USDA officials about the need to announce a general sign-up period, given that a substantial amount of CRP acres are set to expire on September 30, 2010 and that farmers were allowed to begin destroying grass cover on certain expiring acres on July 1, 2010. This announcement finally gives Kansas farmers the information they need to make informed land management decisions about whether to prepare their land for production or continue to participate in the CRP contract during the next crop year. The announcement would have been more helpful a month ago, but I am glad that Kansas farmers can now make important management decisions about their CRP acres.

Secretary Vilsack announced today that land owners will have the opportunity to offer land not currently enrolled in CRP and re-enroll CRP contracts set to expire in 2010 during the August sign-up period. For more information about CRP and other FSA programs, please visit your county FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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No Tax Dollars Should Pay for Abortions

Using taxpayer dollars to fund abortions is a clear violation of many Kansans' deeply held beliefs and something I have fought to prevent from happening. This week, I became a sponsor of legislation Congressman Chris Smith (NJ) will soon introduce to protect taxpayers from having to pay for abortion services. The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act will establish a government-wide prohibition on abortion funding. Currently, a host of provisions that prevent taxpayer-funded abortions must be approved each year in annual spending bills. The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act will reduce this need for separate and yearly prohibitions in funding legislation. Importantly, it will also give taxpayers certainty that their hard-earned tax dollars will not be used to destroy innocent human life. [Click here](#) to learn more about my support for defending life.

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Agriculture Subcommittee Reviews Crop Insurance

On Thursday, I participated in a hearing held by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on

General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, on which I serve as the ranking Republican member. The hearing was to review the crop insurance industry. Much of the hearing focused on the recently completed 2011 Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA). I was disappointed the Subcommittee did not hold this hearing before the SRA was completed, but Thursday's hearing was important because it allowed members of the Agriculture Committee to have the opportunity to publicly voice their concerns and objections with the SRA.

I expressed my disappointment in the Risk Management Agency's (RMA) decision to cap agent commissions because the cap is an intrusion by the federal government into a private business decision. While crop insurance was created by the federal government, it was purposefully setup to operate through the use of a private delivery system. I am also concerned the 2011 SRA shifted additional risk from the private insurance industry to the government and ultimately the taxpayer. As implementation of the 2011 SRA moves forward, I will continue to monitor these issues.

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Kansas Soybean Association Expresses Gratitude for Unwavering Support

This week, the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) recognized me for being a champion for Kansas farmers. Kansas soybean producers are among the top producers in the nation and feed families every day across our nation and the world. During my time in Congress, I have

worked hard to preserve a strong safety net, open new foreign markets, and maintain existing domestic markets for Kansas soybean farmers. I appreciate the recognition and will continue to work hard on behalf of all Kansas farmers. [Click here](#) to read the full text of the letter.

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Rule Change Will Help Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently eased the process for veterans seeking health care and disability compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As a result of this change, less evidence will be required for veterans who claim a service connection for PTSD and apply for assistance. This simplification will speed claims processing to ensure veterans returning from war can immediately get the help they need. [Click here](#) to learn more about this change.

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Remembering Commissioner Vernon Berens of Victoria

On Saturday, July 24th, I joined friends and family of Vernon Berens in mourning the loss of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather following his difficult battle with lung cancer. Vernon, 74, is survived by his wife, Norma, his four children and their families. Memorial services were held at St. Fidelis Catholic Church in Victoria.

For many years, Vernon was a school teacher in Ellis County, and a model public servant. He served on the Victoria City Council for more than 10 years, and was serving his fourth term on the Ellis County Commission. Vernon will long be remembered for his kindness, humor, unconditional love for his family. He will also be remembered for his enduring commitment to a better quality of life for the people of Ellis County, where I live with my family. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family during this difficult time. Vernon will be dearly missed.

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Attending Pawnee County Fair in Larned

On Saturday evening, I attended the Pawnee County Fair and enjoyed meeting local residents and visiting with long-time friends at the demolition derby, livestock and 4-H exhibits. This year's County Fair began on July 8 and will conclude Tuesday, July 27. The fun stretched over several weeks with something for everyone to enjoy – a 4-H horse show, arts and crafts exhibit, 5K run, woodworking exhibit, backyard BBQ contest and livestock sale. Thanks to the Pawnee County Fair Association and all the volunteers for their hard work to ensure this year's Fair was a great success.

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Summer Interns Learn About Congress and Legislative Process

Congressional internships offer Kansans a great opportunity to learn about Congress and the legislative process. Four students are serving as congressional interns in my Washington, D.C. office and Hays office this summer: McKenzie Snow, Tommy Struble, Andrew Wiens and Brett Wilson. These students are doing important work for Kansans and gaining valuable experience that will help them in the future.

McKenzie Snow of Wichita, is a 2008 graduate of Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School and will graduate in 2011 from Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in political science.

McKenzie is the daughter of Windell Snow and Brenda Gerleman of Wichita.

Tommy Struble of Salina, is a 2007 graduate of Salina High School Central and will graduate in the spring of 2011 from the University of Kansas. Tommy is the son of Roger Struble and Jane Gates of Salina.

Andrew Wiens of Topeka, is a 2006 graduate of Cornerstone Family School and a 2010 graduate of Tabor College with degrees in philosophy, history, religious studies and business management. Andrew is the son of Emery and Donna Wiens of Topeka.

Brett Wilson of Colby is a 2006 graduate of Colby High School and a 2010 graduate of Concordia University-Nebraska with degrees in business and marketing. Brett is the son of William Wilson of Denver and Carol Wilson of Hays.

Earlier this summer, Sloane Hardman of Osborne, Sam Jeter of Hays and Mike Nolan of Deerfield served as interns in my Washington, D.C. office. [Click here](#) to learn more about applying for a congressional internship in my Washington, D.C., Hays, Hutchinson and Salina offices.

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In the Office

Larry Pitman of Topeka was in with the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care to talk about the organization's efforts to improve the quality of health care in Kansas. Richard Warner and Dan Morin of Topeka were in with the Kansas Medical Society to discuss Medicare reimbursement for doctors. Chuck Stones, Jeannette Richardson and Craig Meader of Waverly were in with the Kansas Bankers Association to discuss financial regulations.

Lou Ann Kibbee and Jennifer Martinson of Hays; Don Dew of Gorham; and Chris and Dan Owens, Roger and Anthony Frischenmeyer, Christi Ireland and Nanette Unruh of Hutchinson were in with SKIL Resource Center to discuss important legislation. Members of the Sunflower Foundation were in to discuss the recently enacted health care bill. In with the group were Heidi Cashman of Lenexa; Ric Dalke of Garden City; Janette Meis of Hays; Katherine Kelly and Roberta Lindbeck of Kansas City; Brutrinia Arellano, Dee Ann DeRoin and Jake Lowen of Lawrence; Arturo Ponce of Liberal; Monica Murnan of Pittsburg; Corrie Edwards, Craig Kaberline, Melissa Ness, Billie Hall, Larry Tobias and Doug Vance of Topeka; Deb Kiker of Wamego; and Annette Graham and Anne Nelson of Wichita.

Derek Sawyer of McPherson was in with American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers conference to discuss environmental regulations that would adversely impact Kansas agriculture. Members of the 2010 Tomorrow's Agribusiness Leaders (TAL) class from The Kansas Grain and Feed Association and Agribusiness Retailers Association were in to talk about pending environmental regulations that could adversely affect Kansas agribusiness and farmers. In with the group were Tom Tunnell, Ron Seeber, and Shari Bennett of Topeka; Stan Stark of Haviland; Russ Ronnebaum of Wichita; Randy Wisenhunt of Hillsboro; Kyle Adams of Lyons; Douglas Biswell of Manhattan; John Borchers of Abilene; Kerry Watson, Jason Creed and Matthew Friesen of Moundridge; James Grilliot of Heston; Matthew Hines of St. Marys; Jonathan Mayes of Overland Park; and Justin Ochs of Johnson.

Adrian Plesha and Jill Strnad of Hutchinson were in with Sunflower Wind to inform me of their latest renewable energy project. Steve Hunt and Tracy Thomas of Kansas City were in with United States Premium Beef to discuss recent proposed regulations published by the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration. Steve Willardsen and Dirk Jones of Wichita were in with Cargill to talk about recently proposed regulations published by the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration.

Joe Dick, Terry Eidson and David Alvey of Kansas City were in with the American Public Power Association to talk about the impact of pending energy legislation on the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities. Pat Lehman of Lawrence, Connie Richmeieiz of Garden City, Greg Foley of Topeka, Ron Brown of Fort Scott and Gene Albers of Cunningham were in with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts to discuss conservation programs being used by Kansas farmers and the need for increased technical assistance to design conservation projects.

Kerry Oliver of Overland Park was in with the Society of Independent Gasoline Marketers of America to talk about renewable fuels, climate change legislation, accounting practices and credit card fees. Mary Robinson of Galena was in with Christians United for Israel to thank me

for supporting Israel's right to defend itself. Brian Kuang of Lenexa, Jenny Hu of Overland Park and Joyce Mitchell of Baldwin City were in with Falun Gong to update me on the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. Dan and Jack Fee and Austin Perry of Hutchinson were in with the Boy Scouts of America to visit.

Several Kansans were in this week for a tour of the U.S. Capitol building, including Rebecca and Emily Falke; Tiffany and Aubrey Hicks; Morgan, Meagan and Kathleen Hizey; Robin and Jamie Bayless; Jaryn Folk; Kaitlyn Youn; Alexia Duncan; Bridgette Housley; and Kinzie Brownnewell of Parsons. In from McPherson for a tour were Timothy and Annie Wyssmann; and Tim, Stephanie, Tucker, Tanner, Laiken, Lauren, and E.J. Hein. Also in for a tour were Harlan, Katherine, Eden and Tristan Opie of Olathe; John, Mitzie and Mariah Hall of Andover; Bret, Elizabeth and Rebecca Irby of Liberal; Crystal and Sylvia Heins of Olpe; Brian, Sheri, Logan, Emily and Daniel Eilert of Beloit; and Jennie and Jessica Straight of Hays.

In from Manhattan were David and Susan Mitchell, Elizabeth Myers and Erin Meyer. Pastor Christopher Hawkins, Trevor Musgrove, Tyler Lehman, Tanner Thurman, Truston Frank, Ashley Hrabe, Nicole Gulseth, Jennifer Beckman, Thomas and Mike Mertz of Salina were also in for a tour. In from Kansas City were Sheri, David and John Seeman; and Gerald, Patricia, Nicholas and Michael Verbeck.

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Contact Me

It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance. To send me an email, [click here](#) . You can also [click here](#) to contact me through one of my Kansas offices or my Washington, D.C., office.

Very truly yours,

Jerry